Railways. In deserving cases, permission to travel in First AC Class and also for taking a companion in the same class/second class is also given. The passes issued are valid for one year only, except in deserving and exceptional cases as decided by the Minister of Railways.

Complimentary Card Passes are available over one or more Zonal Railways with validity period usually not exceeding one year at a time. The Card Pass entitles the holder to perform rail journeys from any station to any station and any number of times.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) (i) Former Members of Parliament

(ii) Arjuna Award Winners, Olympic Medalists and Gold Medalists of Asian and Commonwealth Games.

(iii) Presidents and Secretaries of National Sports Federations (NSFs) and State Olympic Associations (SOAs) affiliated to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

(iv) Receipients of Gallantry Award and widows of winners of Gallantry Awards (Chakra series)

(v) Complimentary Card Passes at the discretion of the Minister of Railways to organisations and individuals.

(f) No cases of misutilisation of free passes/train concession passes have come to notice during the last six months.

(g) The ticket checking staff have standing instructions to treat persons travelling with improper tickets/free passes/train concession passes as per extant rules and charge them accordingly.

[Translation]

Time Allotted to Nepali Programmes

228. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the time allotted to each day to Nepali Programmes on Doordarshan in various States particularly in Maharashtra;

(b) whether the Government have received any proposal to increase the time allotted to Nepali programmes;

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Only Doordarshan Kendra, Calcutta (West Bengal) is telecasting Nepali programmes for a duration of 10 minutes on every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and 15 minutes on every Tuesday. No Nepali programme is being telecast by Doordarshan Kendra, Mumbai in Maharashtra

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

[English]

Norms for Telecasting Epic Serials

229. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the norms fixed for telecast of epic serials on Doordarshan;

(b) whether the Government propose to serialise and telecast Hindi serials on ancient and classic dramas in Gujarat; and

(c) if so, the details of the plans proposed to be drawn up in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No separate norms are fixed for telecast of epic serials on Doordarshan and the proposals for such serials are considered under sponsored category by the Selection Committee alongwith other proposals.

(b) The proposals for telecast of Hindi serials on ancient and classic dramas in Gujarat, as and when received, will be considered by the Selection Committee alongwith other such proposals.

(c) Doordarshan will continue to endeavour, as in the past, to select such sponsored serials which propagate high socio-cultural values, seek to inculcate in the viewers equal respect for different religions, promote national integration and provide wholesome entertainment.

Lackness of Air Transport Services

230. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that lack of adequate and quality air transport services has hampered the country's potential for tourism development and growth;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial measures taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) To ensure that air transport services grow in a balanced manner throughout the country, route dispersal guidelines have been issued requiring operators of trunk routes to provide capacity on other routes also including the North East, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and

Nicobar and Lakshwadeep islands. Regional airlines are also being encouraged to airlink unconnected districts and towns of tourists interest.

Target Fixed for Telephone Lines

231. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the target fixed for providing telephone lines in the country during the current year, circle-wise;

(b) the percentage of the projection met till date;

(c) the names of the telecom circles which are behind the targets stating the reasons for the shortfall in the targets; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to achieve the annual target for telephone lines?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The target fixed for providing telephone lines in the country during the current year (1996-97) is 24.5 lakhs. The circle-wise target is given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) 29.87 percent of the target is met till 31.10.96.

(c) and (d). Necessary equipments and funds for providing telephone lines have been allotted by the Government to all the Telecom Circles and the equipments have started reaching the sites. It is expected that the target set for 1996-97 is likely to be fully met.

STATEMENT

S.No.	Name of Unit	Annual Target 1996-97
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	123000
2.	Assam	18000
3.	Bihar	47000
4.	Gujarat	188000
5.	Haryana	64000
6.	Himachal Pradesh	27000
7.	J & K	23000
8.	Karnataka	133000
9.	Kerala	228000
10.	M.P.	45000
11.	Maharashtra	203000
12.	North-East	18000
13.	Orissa	27000
14.	Punjab	153000
15.	Rajasthan	123000
16.	Tamilnadu	188000
17.	U. Pradesh (E)	80000
18.	U. Pradesh (W)	75000
19.	W. Bengal	55000
20.	A. Nicobar	2000
21.	Mumbai	250000
22.	Calcutta	55000
23.	Delhi	250000
24.	Madras	75000
	Total	2450000

Handing Over of Mining Rights

232. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether mining rights of diamond deposits in several States are being handed over to International mining giant DE BEERS;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) its impact on Mineral Policy?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b). No, Sir. Mineral Concessions are granted by the respective State Government as per provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and rules made thereunder only.

(c) Does not arise.

Adult Channel

233. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of women's Organisations, including the National Federation of Indian Women and YWCA had urged the Government to prevent launching of the country's first adult satellite TV Channel "Plus 21"; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. We have received representation on the subject on behalf of a number of women's organisations, including the National Federation of Indian Women and YWCA. A Civil Writ Petition has also been filed in Delhi High Court on the same subject by the National Commission for Women and the matter is subjudice.